

Central States; Charles A. Callis, Southern States; John M. Knight, Western States; Joseph W. McMurrin, California; Brigham S. Young, Northwestern States; Rey L. Pratt, Mexico; Joseph Quinney, Jr., Canada; Eugene J. Neff, Hawaiian, and Benjamin Goddard, Bureau of Information, Temple Block, Salt Lake City.

All the seats in the large Tabernacle were occupied, both in the gallery and in the main hall and on the choir stand. Hundreds were standing in the side aisles, both on the main floor and in the gallery.

President Grant announced that the choir and congregation would sing, "O ye mountains high," out of respect to President Charles W. Penrose. President Grant read the poem in full, and stated that by permission of President Penrose the words in the song, "on the 'necks' of thy foes thou shalt tread," were changed, and would be sung, "on the 'schemes' of thy foes thou shalt tread."

After the choir and congregation had sung the hymn with spirit and effect, the opening prayer was offered by Elder Samuel F. Smith, president of the Snowflake stake of Zion.

A solo entitled, "Hosanna" was sung by Melvin Peterson.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

It is very gratifying, indeed, to see this immense congregation here this morning, bespeaking the interest of the Latter-day Saints in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is customary at the opening session of our conference to give some statistics and to refer to the condition of the Church at home and abroad. I am very pleased to be able to announce that the work of the Lord is growing all over the world; and that there is never a month or a year but what the Church is stronger, spiritually and financially, than it was the month or the year previous.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The following financial statement I am sure will be of interest to the people here assembled:

From the tithes of the Church there has been expended for stake and ward purposes, \$1,352,663.43.

For education, the maintenance and operation of Church schools, \$727,808.93.

For construction, maintenance and operation of temples, \$442,018.46.

For the care of the worthy poor and other charitable purposes, including hospital treatment, \$175,520.77.

For the maintenance and operation of all the missions, and for the erection of places of worship and other buildings in the missions, \$700,664.09.

This makes a total of \$3,398,675.68, taken from the tithes for the maintenance and operation of the stakes and wards, for the maintenance and operation of Church schools and temples, for charities, and for mission activities.

In addition to charities paid out of the tithes as before named, there have also been disbursed the fast offerings and Relief Society and other charities, amounting to \$489,406.61, which amount added to the \$175,520.77 paid from the tithes, makes a total of Church charities, \$664,927.38.

CHURCH GROWTH FOR THE YEAR 1924

Children blessed and entered on the records of the Church in stakes and missions, 19,955.

Children baptized in the stakes and missions, 14,047.

Converts baptized and entered on the records of the stakes and missions, 7,556.

There are now 94 stakes of Zion, 907 wards, 70 independent branches connected with the stakes, 24 missions and 654 branches in the missions.

SOCIAL STATISTICS

Birth rate, 33 per thousand.

Marriage rate, 13 per thousand.

Death rate, 7.3 per thousand.

There are 160,634 persons in the Church who are married; of this number 256 persons were divorced in the year 1924.

Families owning their own homes, 72 per cent.

PRESIDENT C. W. PENROSE SERIOUSLY ILL

As announced in the opening, President Charles W. Penrose is in a precarious condition. He sends his love to all the brethren, and desires them to know that they have his confidence in all that they may do; and his message to the Saints is to obey the law, wherever they reside.

Elder Seymour B. Young, President of the First Council of Seventy, has passed away since our last conference, having been a faithful member of the Council for something over forty years.

A MISSION HOME IN SALT LAKE CITY

A home on State street has been dedicated for the entertainment of missionaries, and for the purpose of giving them instructions for a week or more, prior to their departure upon their missions; and also to take care of any returning missionaries who may be stopping briefly in this city on their way home, after having filled an honorable mission. We are pleased to announce that at the dedication there was a rich outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord, and we feel assured in our hearts, judging from the inspiration of the occasion, that it will be a source of great benefit to our young men and young women who are called to go out into the mission field.

CHANGES IN STAKES

There have been some changes in a number of the stakes, and the new men chosen to preside are as follows:

Curlew stake, Colen H. Sweeten.

Yellowstone stake, John M. White.

Nebo stake, Lee R. Taylor.

San Luis stake, James P. Jensen.

Young stake, Elmer F. Taylor.

New wards have been organized since our last meeting as follows:

Hillcrest ward, Grant stake.

Inglewood ward, Los Angeles stake.

LaGrand Second ward, Nebo stake.
 Payson Fourth ward, Nebo stake.
 Santaquin Second ward, Nebo stake.
 Genola ward, Nebo stake.
 Virginia City ward, Los Angeles stake.
 Home Gardens ward, Los Angeles stake.
 Ballard ward Lost River stake.
 New stakes organized, since our last conference:
 Kolob stake, President George Ray Murdock.
 Palmyra stake, President Henry A. Gardner.

In addition to the death of President Seymour B. Young we announce the death, since our last meeting, of David H. Cannon, president of the St. George temple, for many years; Bishop James A. Wright, of Bingham ward, Jordan stake, and Bishop Armond T. Rose, of North Farmington ward, South Davis stake.

MISSIONARY WORK

Perhaps no one thing in connection with the Church is as dear to the hearts of the Latter-day Saints as our missionary labor. Counting the time, the salaries that might be earned by those who are in the mission field, and the expense of maintaining them there, the Latter-day Saints are expending today something over \$2,000,000 a year for the spread of the gospel in the world.

We know that the first and most important duty for us is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, might, mind and strength; and second to that is love for our fellowmen. No people in all the world in proportion to their numbers, are giving such evidence of a love for their fellowmen, and a desire for their welfare, as are the Latter-day Saints. Our missionary work proclaims to all the world our willingness to make financial sacrifice and to labor with no hope of earthly reward, for the salvation of the souls of the children of our Father in heaven. I am sure that a general statement of the missions will be of interest to this congregation.

We have in the California mission, presided over most ably by President Joseph W. McMurrin, 125 missionaries. There are 8,625 people in that mission. We own Church property in that mission valued at \$289,114.04.

President <i>American Missions:</i>	Missionaries	Members	Church Property
California, Joseph W. McMurrin.....	125	8,625	\$289,114.04
Canadian Joseph Quinney, Jr.....	71	716	23,021.47
Central, Samuel O. Bennion.....	158	8,712	110,410.26
Eastern, Brigham H. Roberts.....	143	4,689	232,818.55
Mexican, Rey L. Pratt.....	76	2,683	15,184.12
Northern, John H. Taylor.....	127	5,141	88,694.57
Northwestern, Brigham S. Young.....	99	5,599	82,535.76
Southern, Charles A. Callis.....	197	23,047	64,066.14
Western, John M. Knight.....	96	4,977	102,385.44
Total	1,092	64,189	\$1,008,230.35

Each and all of the men presiding over these missions are giving the best in their power for the advancement of their missions. They are men of God, devoted to the welfare of their respective missions. And this can be said also of all the other missions, the statistics of which I shall now read, giving the name of the mission, the president, the missionaries, the membership and the Church property.

European Missions:

Armenian, Joseph W. Booth.....	2	164	450.00
British, James E. Talmage.....	151	5,670	78,518.17

(Here let me mention the splendid work Elder James E. Talmage is doing presiding over the European mission. The fact that he is a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh gives him a standing in Europe that perhaps none of the rest of us could possibly have. He is receiving excellent consideration from newspapers there, and is working early and late, as he has done all his life. He is one of the most industrious, energetic men I have ever known, and is making a very splendid successor to President David O. McKay, who did such a good work as the president of the European mission.)

Danish, John S. Hansen.....	24	1,621	55,284.95
French, Russell H. Blood.....	30	468	1,242.03
Netherlands, Charles S. Hyde.....	61	3,189	57,229.02
Norwegian, A. Richard Peterson.....	17	1,621	52,774.43
South African, J. Wyley Sessions.....	18	485	17,823.30
Swedish, Hugo D. E. Peterson.....	30	2,051	53,350.17
Swiss and German, Fred Tadge.....	226	11,102	51,497.79
Total	559	26,371	\$368,169.86

Island Missions:

Australian, Charles H. Hyde.....	40	1,115	40,911.18
Hawaiian, Eugene J. Neff.....	61	13,083	195,830.00
Japan [Discontinued].....		164	
New Zealand, Angus T. Wright.....	45	6,184	150,575.66
Samoan, Ernest L. Butler.....	44	3,462	92,789.24
Tahitian, Ole B. Peterson.....	11	1,721	13,403.70
Tongan, Mark V. Coombs.....	19	1,051	24,853.52
Total	220	26,780	\$518,363.30

General:

Smith Mem. Farm, Angus J. Cannon.....			20,000.00
Palmyra Farm, Willard Bean.....			20,000.00
Temple Block, Benjamin Goddard.....			40,000.00
Total	1,871	117,340	\$1,974,763.51

The grand total of our missionaries is 1,871; of members in the missions, 117,340; the grand total of Church property in these missions is \$1,934,763.51, lacking but a very few dollars of \$2,000,000 of money invested in Church property in the missions throughout the world.

Certainly when we consider the limited means of the people who

embrace the gospel all over the world—for the gospel seems to reach the poor—we have great cause to rejoice in the financial showing in our missions, as well as the wonderful showing financially here at home.

PRESIDENT GRANT'S TOUR OF THE MISSIONS

Since I last had the privilege of meeting with you in general conference, I have visited the missionaries in the east, and given them instructions—in Indianapolis, Indiana; Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; Detroit, Michigan, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin; also in Chicago, and held public meetings in all of these places except Chicago.

At Minneapolis we had the pleasure of dedicating a very splendid meetinghouse and recreation hall erected there, and of meeting with a most excellent class of Latter-day Saints. We have chapels also at St. Paul and Minneapolis. The Saints at Detroit and at Indianapolis are gathering funds for the purpose of assisting in erecting chapels in those places.

On Nov. 27, I left Salt Lake City for Independence to attend the funeral of my cousin and the cousin of President Joseph F. Smith, Thalia Grant Smith. The services were well attended. After that I had the privilege of holding meetings in Independence, Kansas City, and St. Louis; also at Fort Worth, San Antonio and Kelsey, Texas, and in Wichita, Kansas, and instructing the missionaries in all of these places, as well as holding public meetings, which were well attended. In a number of places we have excellent meetinghouses to meet in. In others we have rented halls.

During this trip I had the privilege of speaking before the Chamber of Commerce in Kansas City, Missouri. The secretary announced his regret that all of the six thousand members of that great body had not had the privilege of listening to my twenty minute talk. I said in reply: "I can remedy that very easily. I will have six thousand copies of this speech delivered at your office so that when you send out your next monthly statements you can enclose a copy."

He expressed his pleasure in doing it. They were printed, and delivered, and I have received many letters from men who have read the speech, expressing their pleasure in having heard or read what I had to say regarding the faith of the Latter-day Saints. In that short address, speaking very rapidly (much more rapidly than I am doing now), I quoted all the Articles of our Faith and made comments upon them. It took four columns of the *Christmas News* to print that twenty and one-half minutes speech. I rejoice that there were at least a score of influential men who shook hands with me and expressed their pleasure in having heard the plain statement of the faith of the Latter-day Saints, as embodied in our Articles of Faith.

When I stop to reflect that the Latter-day Saints were expelled from the state of Missouri under the exterminating order of the governor of that state, then to think that representative men of one of

prehend it, and that he believed the girl was going to get well. He could not refrain from expressing his surprise at the change in the girl's condition over night. The power of the living God rebuked the destroyer.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them."

The Lord has told us through the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life, through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come."

No man who breaks the Word of Wisdom can gain the same amount of knowledge and intelligence in this world as the man who obeys that law. I don't care who he is or where he comes from, his mind will not be as clear, and he cannot advance as far and as rapidly and retain his power as much as he would if he obeyed the Word of Wisdom.

TITHES AND REAL PROSPERITY

The law of financial prosperity to the Latter-day Saints, under covenant with God, is to be an honest tithepayer, and not to rob the Lord in tithes and offerings. Prosperity comes to those who observe the law of tithing; and when I say prosperity I am not thinking of it in terms of dollars and cents alone, although as a rule the Latter-day Saints who are the best tithepayers are the most prosperous men, financially; but what I count as real prosperity, as the one thing of all others that is of great value to every man and woman living, is the growth in a knowledge of God, and in a testimony, and in the power to live the gospel and to inspire our families to do the same. That is prosperity of the truest kind. I would rather die in poverty knowing that my family could testify that, to the best of the ability with which God had endowed me, I had observed his laws and kept his commandments, and by my example, had proclaimed the gospel, than to have all the wealth of the world.

OUR RELIGION THE TRUTH

Either we have the truth, and this gospel called "Mormonism," is in very deed the plan of life and salvation, the power of God unto salvation, through his Son Jesus Christ, and by following its teachings the greatest of all the gifts of God to man, namely, life eternal, will be ours, or it is not the truth.

God has given to men and women all over the wide world, seeking for the light of his spirit, in answer to humble prayers, a testimony and a knowledge that this gospel is exactly what it purports to be—that it is the truth, that it will stand forever, and that those who live it shall be exalted eternally in the presence of our heavenly Father, and his Son, our Redeemer.